



✧ Highlights ✧

continued on page 2

"The average dog
is a nicer person
than the average person."
- Andrew A. Rooney



LIVING WITH DOGS

Getting Real With Your Dog

One of the most frequent sources of frustration in dog training? Unrealistic expectations. Dogs' intelligence shines through in so many ways that we tend to ascribe them decidedly human cognitive skills, such as the ability to understand complex sentences. It's what some dog trainers refer to as "the Lassie syndrome." If you often find yourself frustrated with your dog, here's a primer on what it takes to create a Lassie:

Patience. One basic training class won't do it. The calm, attentive pooches you see on TV picking up slippers and opening doors? They have spent years in training. You wouldn't expect a child to become a piano virtuoso after one semester of classes, right?

Repetition. Dogs don't generalize well. This means they need to learn the same lesson—don't jump on people, for example—in many different settings before they grasp that we'd always prefer them to greet visitors politely, not just at home. And when the setting in question is full of tempting distractions, like a dog park, multiply the number of repetitions needed.

Motivation. Motivation is what drives your dog to do things, like respond to your cues—especially the second and third times you ask. And no, contrary to popular belief, making us happy is not a strong motivator for dogs. Common canine motivators include going for car rides, getting a ball tossed, going on walks, playing tug, access to other dogs, access to smells, and—the biggie—food.

Our friendships with dogs work best when they are based on realistic expectations. Why not take a break from the fast-paced, results-oriented mindset of humans and have some fun practicing manners during walks and in your everyday routines? Make it part of your life together, just like walks and baths and teeth cleaning. Your dog will learn faster (even if that's slower than you first hoped) and you will suffer much less frustration along the way.



DID YOU KNOW?

These Doggie History Facts?

Pre-historically: The oldest known cave art depicting dogs is in the Cueva de El Castillo cave in Puente Viesgo, Spain. The charcoal and red ochre drawings, dating back approximately 40,000 years, include goats, horses, mammoths, bison, and dogs.

Antiquity: Dogs were so valued as pets in ancient Egypt that families would shave their eyebrows as a sign of grief when they lost a dog. The ancient Romans had many pets, including apes and cats, but favored dogs above all.

The Renaissance. Leonardo da Vinci was not just a genius inventor and artist, but an admirable person even by today's standards. In his notebooks, he questions man's inherent rights over animals—completely at odds with the accepted tenets of his age.



A WORLD OF DOGS

Maternal Altruism In Dogs

Human beings are capable of and often display maternal altruism well beyond our own species. We adopt other people's children, yes, but we also adopt dogs and cats, even trees and roadways. Viewed through an evolutionary lens, this is interesting. Why aren't we focusing on the survival of our own species—even our own tribe—instead of wasting precious energy and resources on stray cats or endangered fungi? Scientists explain this peculiarity by pointing to our sophisticated cognitive equipment. Because we can project thoughts into the future, we're able to see the long-term view. The bigger perspective. We understand the principle of goodness and know that caring for others not only makes us feel good, but also sets a standard for kindness that strengthens our community and the potential for reciprocal help. In other words, what goes around comes around.



But if that explains why humans show maternal altruism, what about dogs (and other animals) that do the same? Charles Darwin's original theory that animals should behave only in ways that ensure their own survival crumbled when he discovered copious evidence of interspecies altruism. Take a few recent examples of the sorts of things he must have encountered: In 2006 in Varanasi, India, a Pomeranian named Guddi adopted an orphaned baby monkey, carrying it around for years. In 2012 in Berlin, Germany, Baby the French bulldog adopted six wild boar piglets she came across in a forest near her home. An English news crew filmed Baby grooming and playing with the piglets, and to watch her, you would swear she believes these are her puppies.

Behaviorists have a hard time explaining these and other examples of interspecies maternal altruism. We humans know that by preserving the animal and plant life around us, we are protecting the health of the planet and enriching the future lives of our offspring. Baby the French bulldog isn't capable of such an advanced assessment. Is it plausible that dogs and other animals sense our planetary connectedness at an instinctual level we don't yet understand? If so, it would explain many an odd adoption story from the animal kingdom. And it's a feel-good thought, too.

(continued from page 1)



DOGS IN ACTION

Treibball

Pronounced “try ball,” this fun new dog sport was born in Germany in the mid-2000s when a Dutch hunting and herding dog trainer, Jan Nijboer, wondered if he could teach high-energy dogs to play soccer. The game boils down to getting your dog (or a team of dogs) to push large exercise balls across a field into a goal. While herding-type dogs and dogs who love chase games are natural Treibball contenders, dogs of any age and breed can take part. As with all dog sports, some foundational skills are important. For Treibball, it’s an advantage if your dog knows *sit*, *down*, *left*, *right*, and object targeting.



Playing the game is simple. Arrange eight exercise balls (some play with fewer) in a triangle in the center of your field and set up kid-sized soccer goals or mark the goal zone with orange traffic cones. The dogs—with handlers using commands like “center” and “drive” to guide them—now have seven to 10 minutes (depending on age and size) to push the balls into a goal with their noses (no teeth allowed). Treibball Associations are springing up in many countries, bringing with them formal competitions. But Treibball can just as easily be played recreationally. It provides terrific physical and mental stimulation for your dog—and a fun time for you.



HEALTHY DOG

Pilates For Dogs

Is your dog a sports lover who relishes agility, flyball, freestyle, or disc dog competition? Or is she more of a couch potato? Perhaps she’s getting on a bit in years? Then your dog could benefit from a proactive approach to injury prevention. That’s where core conditioning—or Pilates—for dogs comes into the picture. In humans, Pilates exercises improve posture, balance, coordination, and range of motion, reduce back pain, alleviate tension, and reduce injuries. Similar exercises can do much the same for dogs.

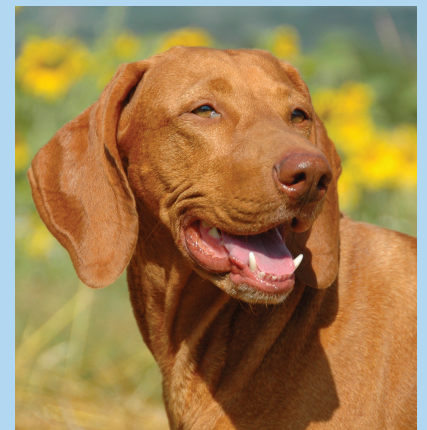
In addition to *roll over*, *down dog* (bow), and *spin*, one of the best exercises for canine core conditioning is the classic *sit up and beg* position (not advisable for Dachshunds or dogs with back problems). With all these, the trick is to start slowly and gradually build duration and flexibility. To learn more, search YouTube for “pilates for dogs” or buy a book or DVD with instructions.

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Vizsla

This Hungarian hunter can be found in smooth or wire-haired varieties. Standout characteristics are grace, intelligence, friendliness, exercise addiction, a penchant for chewing things, and a strong dislike of alone time. The well-socialized Vizsla takes worship of his human family to a new level, something that has earned the breed the nickname “the Velcro dog.” Famous for the hunting skills he was originally bred for, the Vizsla embodies versatility. Rally, agility, flyball, obedience, tracking, and search & rescue, this dog can do it all and is at his happiest after a strenuous workout. Vizslas live by the dictum “run, don’t walk” so the breed is not for everyone. But if you’re an avid hiker or dog sport fan and have time to devote to training and companionship, the Vizsla is a stellar choice. And so pretty, too.

To give a Vizsla a forever home, search online for the nearest rescue group.



OUR SERVICES

.....



5 Tips For Cold-Weather Walks

Beware the burn. If you'll be walking where the roads are being salted or treated with ice-melting chemicals, protect your dog's footpads with booties or petroleum jelly.

Stay bundled. Unless your dog is a northern breed that lives for the snow, invest in a sweater or coat that covers him to the base of the tail and under the belly.

Leash up. If you're out in bad weather, don't let your pooch off leash. Heavy snowfall obscures familiar scents, making it easier for dogs to become disoriented and lost.

Skip the ice. Stay away from frozen ponds, lakes, or other water. You never know if the ice will support your dog's weight.

Slow down. Running in cold weather is tougher on your dog's heart because it's pumping extra hard to keep his body temperature up. If you notice labored breathing, stop.



Tammy Mills, CPDT-KA
214-926-6715
weareallaboutdogs@yahoo.com
www.allabout-dogs.com
Fun & Humane Dog Training



Information and advice provided in this newsletter is general in nature and should not be relied upon to solve any particular situation. For all issues with your dog, please seek the services of a competent professional. The author and publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility for any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused by the information in this newsletter.